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1ST SESSION

S. 451

To establish a National Foreign Language Coordination Council.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 31, 2007

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DODD, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. DURBIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish a National Foreign Language Coordination Council.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FOREIGN LAN-**
4 **GUAGE COORDINATION COUNCIL.**

5 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
6 “National Foreign Language Coordination Act of 2007”.

7 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
8 Executive Office of the President a National Foreign Lan-
9 guage Coordination Council (in this section referred to as
10 the “Council”).

1 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall consist of the
2 following members or their designees:

3 (1) The National Language Director, who shall
4 serve as the chairperson of the Council.

5 (2) The Secretary of Education.

6 (3) The Secretary of Defense.

7 (4) The Secretary of State.

8 (5) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

9 (6) The Attorney General.

10 (7) The Director of National Intelligence.

11 (8) The Secretary of Labor.

12 (9) The Director of the Office of Personnel
13 Management.

14 (10) The Director of the Office of Management
15 and Budget.

16 (11) The Secretary of Commerce.

17 (12) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
18 ices.

19 (13) The Secretary of the Treasury.

20 (14) The Secretary of Housing and Urban De-
21 velopment.

22 (15) The Secretary of Agriculture.

23 (16) The Chairman and President of the Ex-
24 port-Import Bank of the United States.

1 (17) The heads of such other Federal agencies
2 as the Council considers appropriate.

3 (d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be
5 charged with—

6 (A) overseeing, coordinating, and imple-
7 menting the National Security Language Initia-
8 tive;

9 (B) developing a national foreign language
10 strategy, building upon the efforts of the Na-
11 tional Security Language Initiative, within 18
12 months after the date of the enactment of this
13 section, in consultation with—

14 (i) State and local government agen-
15 cies;

16 (ii) academic sector institutions;

17 (iii) foreign language related interest
18 groups;

19 (iv) business associations;

20 (v) industry;

21 (vi) heritage associations; and

22 (vii) other relevant stakeholders;

23 (C) conducting a survey of the status of
24 Federal agency foreign language and area ex-

1 pertise and agency needs for such expertise;
2 and

3 (D) monitoring the implementation of such
4 strategy through—

5 (i) application of current and recently
6 enacted laws; and

7 (ii) the promulgation and enforcement
8 of rules and regulations.

9 (2) STRATEGY CONTENT.—The strategy devel-
10 oped under paragraph (1) shall include—

11 (A) recommendations for amendments to
12 title 5, United States Code, in order to improve
13 the ability of the Federal Government to recruit
14 and retain individuals with foreign language
15 proficiency and provide foreign language train-
16 ing for Federal employees;

17 (B) the long term goals, anticipated effect,
18 and needs of the National Security Language
19 Initiative;

20 (C) identification of crucial priorities
21 across all sectors;

22 (D) identification and evaluation of Fed-
23 eral foreign language programs and activities,
24 including—

1 (i) any duplicative or overlapping pro-
 2 grams that may impede efficiency;

3 (ii) recommendations on coordination;

4 (iii) program enhancements; and

5 (iv) allocation of resources so as to
 6 maximize use of resources;

7 (E) needed national policies and cor-
 8 responding legislative and regulatory actions in
 9 support of, and allocation of designated re-
 10 sources to, promising programs and initiatives
 11 at all levels (Federal, State, and local), espe-
 12 cially in the less commonly taught languages
 13 that are seen as critical for national security
 14 and global competitiveness during the next 20
 15 to 50 years;

16 (F) effective ways to increase public aware-
 17 ness of the need for foreign language skills and
 18 career paths in all sectors that can employ
 19 those skills, with the objective of increasing
 20 support for foreign language study among—

21 (i) Federal, State, and local leaders;

22 (ii) students;

23 (iii) parents;

24 (iv) elementary, secondary, and post-
 25 secondary educational institutions; and

1 (v) employers;

2 (G) recommendations for incentives for re-
3 lated educational programs, including foreign
4 language teacher training;

5 (H) coordination of cross-sector efforts, in-
6 cluding public-private partnerships;

7 (I) coordination initiatives to develop a
8 strategic posture for language research and rec-
9 ommendations for funding for applied foreign
10 language research into issues of national con-
11 cern;

12 (J) recommendations for assistance for—

13 (i) the development of foreign lan-
14 guage achievement standards; and

15 (ii) corresponding assessments for the
16 elementary, secondary, and postsecondary
17 education levels, including the National As-
18 sessment of Educational Progress in for-
19 eign languages;

20 (K) recommendations for development of—

21 (i) language skill-level certification
22 standards;

23 (ii) frameworks for pre-service and
24 professional development study for those
25 who teach foreign language;

- 1 (iii) suggested graduation criteria for
 2 foreign language studies and appropriate
 3 non-language studies, such as—
- 4 (I) international business;
 - 5 (II) national security;
 - 6 (III) public administration;
 - 7 (IV) health care;
 - 8 (V) engineering;
 - 9 (VI) law;
 - 10 (VII) journalism; and
 - 11 (VIII) sciences;
- 12 (L) identification of and means for repli-
 13 cating best practices at all levels and in all sec-
 14 tors, including best practices from the inter-
 15 national community; and
- 16 (M) recommendations for overcoming bar-
 17 riers in foreign language proficiency.
- 18 (3) NATIONAL SECURITY LANGUAGE INITIA-
 19 TIVE.—The term “National Security Language Ini-
 20 tiative” means the comprehensive national plan of
 21 the President announced on January 5, 2006, and
 22 under the direction of the Secretaries of State, Edu-
 23 cation, and Defense and the Director of National In-
 24 telligence to expand foreign language education for
 25 national security purposes in the United States.

1 (e) SUBMISSION OF STRATEGY TO PRESIDENT AND
 2 CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of
 3 enactment of this section, the Council shall prepare and
 4 transmit to the President and the relevant committees of
 5 Congress the strategy required under subsection (d).

6 (f) MEETINGS.—The Council may hold such meet-
 7 ings, and sit and act at such times and places, as the
 8 Council considers appropriate, but shall meet in formal
 9 session at least 2 times a year. State and local government
 10 agencies and other organizations (such as academic sector
 11 institutions, foreign language-related interest groups,
 12 business associations, industry, and heritage community
 13 organizations) shall be invited, as appropriate, to public
 14 meetings of the Council at least once a year.

15 (g) STAFF.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director may—

17 (A) appoint, without regard to the provi-
 18 sions of title 5, United States Code, governing
 19 the competitive service, such personnel as the
 20 Director considers necessary; and

21 (B) compensate such personnel without re-
 22 gard to the provisions of chapter 51 and sub-
 23 chapter III of chapter 53 of that title.

24 (2) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—

25 Upon request of the Council, any Federal Govern-

1 ment employee may be detailed to the Council with-
2 out reimbursement, and such detail shall be without
3 interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege

4 (3) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—With the
5 approval of the Council, the Director may procure
6 temporary and intermittent services under section
7 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

8 (4) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Council members and
9 staff shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
10 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for
11 employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter
12 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from
13 their homes or regular places of business in the per-
14 formance of services for the Council.

15 (5) SECURITY CLEARANCE.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
17 graph (B), the appropriate Federal agencies or
18 departments shall cooperate with the Council in
19 expeditiously providing to the Council members
20 and staff appropriate security clearances to the
21 extent possible pursuant to existing procedures
22 and requirements.

23 (B) EXCEPTION.—No person shall be pro-
24 vided with access to classified information

1 under this section without the appropriate re-
2 quired security clearance access.

3 (6) COMPENSATION.—The rate of pay for any
4 employee of the Council (including the Director)
5 may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the
6 Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5,
7 United States Code.

8 (h) POWERS.—

9 (1) DELEGATION.—Any member or employee of
10 the Council may, if authorized by the Council, take
11 any action that the Council is authorized to take in
12 this section.

13 (2) INFORMATION.—

14 (A) COUNCIL AUTHORITY TO SECURE.—

15 The Council may secure directly from any Fed-
16 eral agency such information, consistent with
17 Federal privacy laws, including The Family
18 Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C.
19 1232g) and Department of Education’s General
20 Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232(h)),
21 the Council considers necessary to carry out its
22 responsibilities.

23 (B) REQUIREMENT TO FURNISH RE-
24 QUESTED INFORMATION.—Upon request of the

1 Director, the head of such agency shall furnish
2 such information to the Council.

3 (3) DONATIONS.—The Council may accept, use,
4 and dispose of gifts or donations of services or prop-
5 erty.

6 (4) MAIL.—The Council may use the United
7 States mail in the same manner and under the same
8 conditions as other Federal agencies.

9 (i) CONFERENCES, NEWSLETTER, AND WEBSITE.—
10 In carrying out this section, the Council—

11 (1) may arrange Federal, regional, State, and
12 local conferences for the purpose of developing and
13 coordinating effective programs and activities to im-
14 prove foreign language education;

15 (2) may publish a newsletter concerning Fed-
16 eral, State, and local programs that are effectively
17 meeting the foreign language needs of the nation;
18 and

19 (3) shall create and maintain a website con-
20 taining information on the Council and its activities,
21 best practices on language education, and other rel-
22 evant information.

23 (j) ANNUAL REPORT.—

24 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-

1 nually thereafter, the Council shall prepare and
2 transmit to the President and the relevant commit-
3 tees of Congress a report that describes—

4 (A) the activities of the Council;

5 (B) the efforts of the Council to improve
6 foreign language education and training; and

7 (C) impediments to the use of a National
8 Foreign Language program, including any stat-
9 utory and regulatory restrictions.

10 (2) RELEVANT COMMITTEES.—For purposes of
11 paragraph (1), the relevant committees of Congress
12 include—

13 (A) in the House of Representatives—

14 (i) the Committee on Appropriations;

15 (ii) the Committee on Armed Services;

16 (iii) the Committee on Education and
17 Labor;

18 (iv) the Committee on Oversight and
19 Government Reform;

20 (v) the Committee on Small Business;

21 (vi) the Committee on Foreign Af-
22 fairs; and

23 (vii) the Permanent Select Committee
24 on Intelligence;

25 (B) in the Senate—

- 1 (i) the Committee on Appropriations;
- 2 (ii) the Committee on Armed Services;
- 3 (iii) the Committee on Health, Edu-
- 4 cation, Labor, and Pensions;
- 5 (iv) the Committee on Homeland Se-
- 6 curity and Governmental Affairs;
- 7 (v) the Committee on Foreign Rela-
- 8 tions; and
- 9 (vi) the Select Committee on Intel-
- 10 ligence.

11 (k) ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL LANGUAGE DI-
 12 RECTOR.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established a Na-
 14 tional Language Director who shall be appointed by
 15 the President. The National Language Director shall
 16 be a nationally recognized individual with credentials
 17 and abilities across the sectors to be involved with
 18 creating and implementing long-term solutions to
 19 achieving national foreign language and cultural
 20 competency.

21 (2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The National Lan-
 22 guage Director shall—

23 (A) develop and monitor the implementa-
 24 tion of a national foreign language strategy,

1 built upon the efforts of the National Security
 2 Language Initiative, across all sectors;

3 (B) establish formal relationships among
 4 the major stakeholders in meeting the needs of
 5 the Nation for improved capabilities in foreign
 6 languages and cultural understanding, including
 7 Federal, State, and local government agencies,
 8 academia, industry, labor, and heritage commu-
 9 nities; and

10 (C) coordinate and lead a public informa-
 11 tion campaign that raises awareness of public
 12 and private sector careers requiring foreign lan-
 13 guage skills and cultural understanding, with
 14 the objective of increasing interest in and sup-
 15 port for the study of foreign languages among
 16 national leaders, the business community, local
 17 officials, parents, and individuals.

18 (I) ENCOURAGEMENT OF STATE INVOLVEMENT.—

19 (1) STATE CONTACT PERSONS.—The Council
 20 shall consult with each State to provide for the des-
 21 ignation by each State of an individual to serve as
 22 a State contact person for the purpose of receiving
 23 and disseminating information and communications
 24 received from the Council.

1 (2) STATE INTERAGENCY COUNCILS AND LEAD
2 AGENCIES.—Each State is encouraged to establish a
3 State interagency council on foreign language co-
4 ordination or designate a lead agency for the State
5 for the purpose of assuming primary responsibility
6 for coordinating and interacting with the Council
7 and State and local government agencies as nec-
8 essary.

9 (m) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—The Council
10 shall provide to Congress such information as may be re-
11 quested by Congress, through reports, briefings, and other
12 appropriate means.

13 (n) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as necessary
15 to carry out this section.

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